

Message Text

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16

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SUBJECT: IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT--PRESS COVERAGE
AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS

SUMMARY: KHALATBARI VISIT CHARACTERIZED BY WELL-
ORCHESTRATED PRESS AND EDITORIAL COVERAGE EMPHASIZING EX-
ISTING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA AND
PRAISING IRAN FOR SUPPORTING ISLAMIC UNITY. PRACTICAL
RESULTS OF TALKS NOT REVEALED, BUT HARMONIOUS NATURE OF
DISCUSSIONS ILLUSTRATED BY COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO QUESTION
OF NOMENCLATURE OF ARAB/PERSIAN GULF. END SUMMARY.

1. KHALATBARI'S VISIT WAS WIDELY COVERED BY JIDDA PRESS,
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BOTH IN NEWS COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS. EDITORIALS INVARIABLY

PRAISED IRAN, DESCRIBING IT AS DEFENDER OF ISLAMIC FAITH AND SUPPORTER OF ISLAMIC UNITY AND SOLIDARITY. PRESS ALSO STRESSED COMMON HISTORICAL BONDS OF TWO COUNTRIES, NOTING AS WELL IRAN HAD BEEN "FIRST" TO CONDEMN ISRAELI OCCUPATION AND TO STAND WITH ARABS FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS.. ONE EDITORIAL UNDERLINED THERE IS NOTHING CURRENTLY TO IMPEDE SAUDI-IRANIAN RELATIONS, WHICH IT DESCRIBED AS "VERY STRONG." PAPER ADDED THAT IRAN, LIKE ARAB NATIONS, IS UNDERSTANDABLY "SEEKING ITS PLACE IN THE SUN."

2 IN A FULL PAGE INTERVIEW WITH THE MANAGING EDITOR OF JIDDA'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS PAPER, AL-MEDINA, KHALATBARI RESPONDED TO QUESTION CONCERNING PURPOSE BEHIND IRAN'S MASSIVE ARMAMENTS PLAN BY NOTING IRAN INTENDING SOLELY TO DEFEND ITS PETROLEUM, AGRICULTURAL AND MINERAL WEALTH. EXPANSION IN IRANIAN ARMAMENTS SHOULD IN NO WAY BE CONSTRUED AS SCHEME FOR SEIZING TERRITORIES FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. KHALATBARI DECLARED IRAN OPPOSED TO ANY FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN AREA, PARTICULARLY BY "BIG POSERS." HE ADDED IRAN IS READY TO WORK AND COOPERATE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS ON BASIS THAT SECURITY OF GULF IS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY.

3. IN PLACE OF COMMUNIQUE KHALATBARI MADE STATEMENT TO PRESS AT CONCLUSION OF VISIT, STRESSING NEED FOR COOPERATION AMONG STATES OF REGION, ADDITION THAT EXCELLENT COOPERATION ALREADY EXISTS BETWEEN IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA WITH REGARD TO PRESERVATION OF PEACE, STABILITY, SECURITY AND FREE NAVIGATION IN GULF. KHALATBARI'S STATEMENT ALSO STRESSED CLOSENESS OF FRATERNAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, ADDING THAT THERE WAS NOTHING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WHICH COULD BE TERMED "AN ISSUE." KHALATBARI ALSO HAD KIND WORDS FOR SAUDI ARABIA'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS. HE THANKED SAUDIS FOR WARM RECEPTION AND LAVISH HOSPITALITY, WHICH HE SAW AS ONE OF BEST EXAMPLES OF DEEP-ROOTED CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO NATIONS.

4. MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS SAQQAF MADE STATEMENT FOR IRANIAN TV AT CONCLUSION OF VISIT.
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HE REFERRED PRINCIPALLY TO BONDS OF ISLAM LINKING TWO NATIONS, ADDING THAT TALKS SOUGHT TO "BENEFIT MUSLIMS AND

AND TALKS SOUGHTS TO "BENEFIT MUSLIMS AND (KEEP THEM) FREE FROM FOREIGN DOMINATION, WITH NO DESIRE FOR EXPANSION AT THE EXPENSE OF A NEIGHBORLY STATE." SAQQAF MADE PASSING REFERENCE AS WELL TO SAUDI SATISFACTION WITH IRAN'S POSITION ON PALESTINE AND JERUSALEM.

5. COMMENT: FOREGOING REVEALS, OF COURSE, DETERMINED
EFFORTS BY BOTH SIDES PUT BEST POSSIBLE PUBLIC FACE ON
VISIT AND TO REBUT CONVENTIONAL ARAB MISGIVINGS WITH REGARD
IRANIAN INTENTIONS. WE HAVE LITTLE REASON BELIEVE TALKS
HERE IN FACT ANYTHING OTHER THAN HARMONIOUS, THOUGH WE
WILL HAVE TO DO SOME MORE PROBING BEFORE WE CAN BE SURE
WHETHER KHALATBARI VISIT DID ACTUALLY RESULT IN SOME
PRACTICAL ADVANCE TOWARD REAL COOPERATION ON IMPORTANT
MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. IT IS WORTH NOTING AS ONE
MINOR EXAMPLE OF COOPERATION THAT IN ORDER EVADE
SEMANTIC DISPUTE AS TO WHETHER GULF ARAB OR PERSIAN
ALL PRESS COMMENTARY AND STATEMENTS FROM EITHER SIDE
REFERRED SIMPLY TO "THE GULF"
THACHER

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